

28 November 1978

Mr. William G. Miller, Staff Director  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Dear Bill:

The enclosed report was provided by the GDIP program manager in response to the request on page 39 of your committee's classified FY 1979 supplement on budget authorization for U.S. intelligence activities. The committee asked for a report by 1 November addressing the use by GDIP agencies of the SAFE upgrade and related matters.

Sincerely,

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REPORT TO THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE ON SAFE COORDINATION

In its report on the FY 1979 Authorization for the National Foreign Intelligence Program, the Committee requested "a brief report detailing the coordination which has taken place in identifying for each agency in the GDIP the specific degree of use which can be made of the SAFE upgrade and the major impediments to achieving the three objectives," of maximum commonality of hardware and software, interoperability among systems and data bases and the broadest access by analysts to the data bases of their own and other agencies. The requested report follows:

The primary vehicle for the coordination of SAFE and other DoD intelligence information system needs within the General Defense Intelligence Program (GDIP) is the Department of Defense Intelligence Information System (DODIIS) Master Plan effort. Within the architectural concept of the DODIIS Master Plan, SAFE is the prototype for systems serving large aggregations of users. Every development and advancement made by SAFE will be considered, and made available, for the benefit of all DODIIS locations. The three objectives of the Committee are contained in the goals and objectives of that planning effort.

DIA has been developing this Plan with the primary focus of identifying the needs of DIA, the Unified and Specified Commands and their components for improved information handling capabilities and on evaluating present capabilities to support those needs. This effort, the efforts of the consolidated SAFE Project Office, and those of the production planners are being coordinated in this manner. Constant contact with the Unified and Specified Commands has been maintained during this planning effort. The draft DODIIS Master Plan has been distributed for review by the military services and commands. The Master Plan is due to be promulgated in the first quarter, FY 1979.

In addition to the DODIIS Master Plan effort, the SAFE Project was briefed and discussed at the last DODIIS Manager's Conference. Points of contact for the Services and commands were identified and several planning sessions were held to discuss the process of identifying SAFE requirements and areas of mutual interest with the Services and Unified and Specified Commands. Current plans call for follow-up planning sessions with the Services and Unified and Specified Commands in early 1979 to determine how SAFE can provide better service than that currently available and further identify and refine known requirements in these areas. It is intended that SAFE will improve access to DIA data bases for a larger number of users, both internal and external to DIA. Greater interoperability will be achieved by allowing the free exchange of data between analysts and between systems within the DODIIS community. Interoperability external to DODIIS will also be provided through interfaces to the Community On-Line System (COINS) and to the CIA through the SAFE system.

Although SAFE is still in the formative stages of design and development it appears that several areas which are under investigation may prove useful and transportable to the entire intelligence community. High speed text search, simplified user language, provisions for analyst support, and the development of modular work stations are a few of the areas within SAFE which can be of utility to the entire intelligence community.

The major impediments to achieving commonality, interoperability and broad analyst access are functions of the heterogeneity, size and stringent security requirements of the U.S. Intelligence Community. Obviously needed is an improved planning focus in the area of intelligence information systems and this improvement is now being demonstrated. Technical impediments include the large and complex investment in information handling systems which are in operation today and which must form the foundation of any community-wide system for the next several years. Additional development of secure computer operating systems and common telecommunication networks are also essential if the full benefits of these systems are to be achieved. Common data base management systems and maximum feasible software commonality, including data standards, are essential to removing these impediments. Current efforts embodied in the DODIIS Master Plan provide an overall architectural concept guiding mid- and long-term system developments. This plan will establish the technical framework for alleviating these impediments and will serve as the vehicle for achieving maximum interchange of SAFE and other newly developed technology within the DODIIS community. Annual review and publication of the DODIIS Master Plan, including update of SAFE capabilities information, will provide a continuing vehicle for management review of progress in achieving interoperability, commonality and broad access within the DODIIS.